THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Society and Politics

Edited by
Derek Hopwood

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
POLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Volume 3

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

This page intentionally left blank

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

Society and Politics

Edited by
DEREK HOPWOOD

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1972 by George Allen & Unwin Ltd

This edition first published in 2016
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 1972 George Allen & Unwin Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-138-83939-7 (Set)
ISBN: 978-1-315-68049-1 (Set) (ebk)
ISBN: 978-1-138-91904-4 (Volume 3) (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-68807-7 (Volume 3) (ebk)

Publisher's Note
The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

Disclaimer
The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

THE ARABIAN PENINSULA
Society and Politics

EDITED BY

DEREK HOPWOOD

London

GEORGE ALLEN AND UNWIN LTD

RUSKIN HOUSE MUSEUM STREET

First published in 1972

This book is copyright under the Berne Convention. All rights are reserved. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study, research, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright Act, 1956, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, electrical, chemical, mechanical, optical, photocopying recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be addressed to the publishers.

© George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1972

ISBN 0 04 953006 6

Printed in Great Britain
in 11 point Fournier type
by Cox & Wyman
Fakenham

FOREWORD

In the Lent Term of the academic year 1968–69, the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London and the Middle East Centre of St Antony's College, Oxford, held a joint Seminar on the Arabian Peninsula. Staff and students from both institutions attended the meetings of the Seminar, which was followed by a three-day conference held at the School in London in March 1969. In addition to members of the staff of both institutions, other invited scholars from Middle Eastern countries, the United States of America and the United Kingdom participated in the conference. The papers which were presented were subsequently prepared for the press by Dr Derek Hopwood of St Antony's College. They represent the opinions of their individual authors. It is our hope that their publication will not only provide students of the Middle East with an introduction to the social economic and political problems of Arabia and the Persian Gulf, but also generate wider interest in further research and study of the area. During the last few years a happy and fruitful academic co-operation has been established between the staff and students of the School's Centre of Middle Eastern Studies and the Middle East Centre at Oxford. We are grateful to both institutions for their financial and administrative support in holding this Seminar and Conference. We also wish to thank the Kuwait Oil Company and the Shell Company for their generous grants in aid. Finally, we should like to thank the Publications Committee of the School for its help towards the publication of this volume and Diana Grimwood-Jones for having prepared the index.

August 1970

A. H. HOURANI, *Oxford*
P. J. VATIKIOTIS, *London*

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration has been made uniform throughout. Diacritical marks, apart from 'ain (ᶜ) and hamza (ʾ), have not been used. The only exceptions are slight variations in Omani place names and in the note on sources in J. C. Wilkinson's paper where diacritical marks have been used. The maps to this paper also use a slightly different system of transliteration.

CONTENTS

Foreword by A. H. Hourani and P. J. Vatikiotis 7

Note on Transliteration 8

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

1. Some Western Studies of Saudi Arabia, Yemen and Aden 13

DEREK HOPWOOD

PART I HISTORY

2. The Development of the Gulf States 31

AHMAD MUSTAFA ABU-HAKIMA

3. Wahhabism and Saudi Arabia 54

GEORGE RENTZ

4. The Origins of the Omani State 67

J. C. WILKINSON

5. Maritime Trade and Imamate Government: Two Principal Themes in the History of Oman to 1728 89

R. D. BATHURST

6. A Prevalence of Furies: Tribes, Politics, and Religion in Oman and Trucial Oman 107

J. B. KELLY

PART II POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

7. The Arabian Peninsula in Arab and Power Politics 145

A. R. KELIDAR

8. Britain, Iran and the Persian Gulf: Some Aspects of the Situation in the 1920s and 1930s 160

R. M. BURRELL

9. Social and Political Change in the Third World: Some Peculiarities of Oil-Producing Principalities of the Persian Gulf 189

FRANK STOAKES

PART III SOCIOLOGY AND CULTURE

10. Some Social Aspects of the Trucial States 219

P. A. LIENHARDT

11. Measuring the Changing Family Consumption Patterns of Aramco's Saudi Arab Employees, 1962 and 1968 231

THOMAS W. SHEA

12. Education and the Press in South Arabia 255

ALI MUHAMMAD LUQMAN

PART IV ECONOMICS

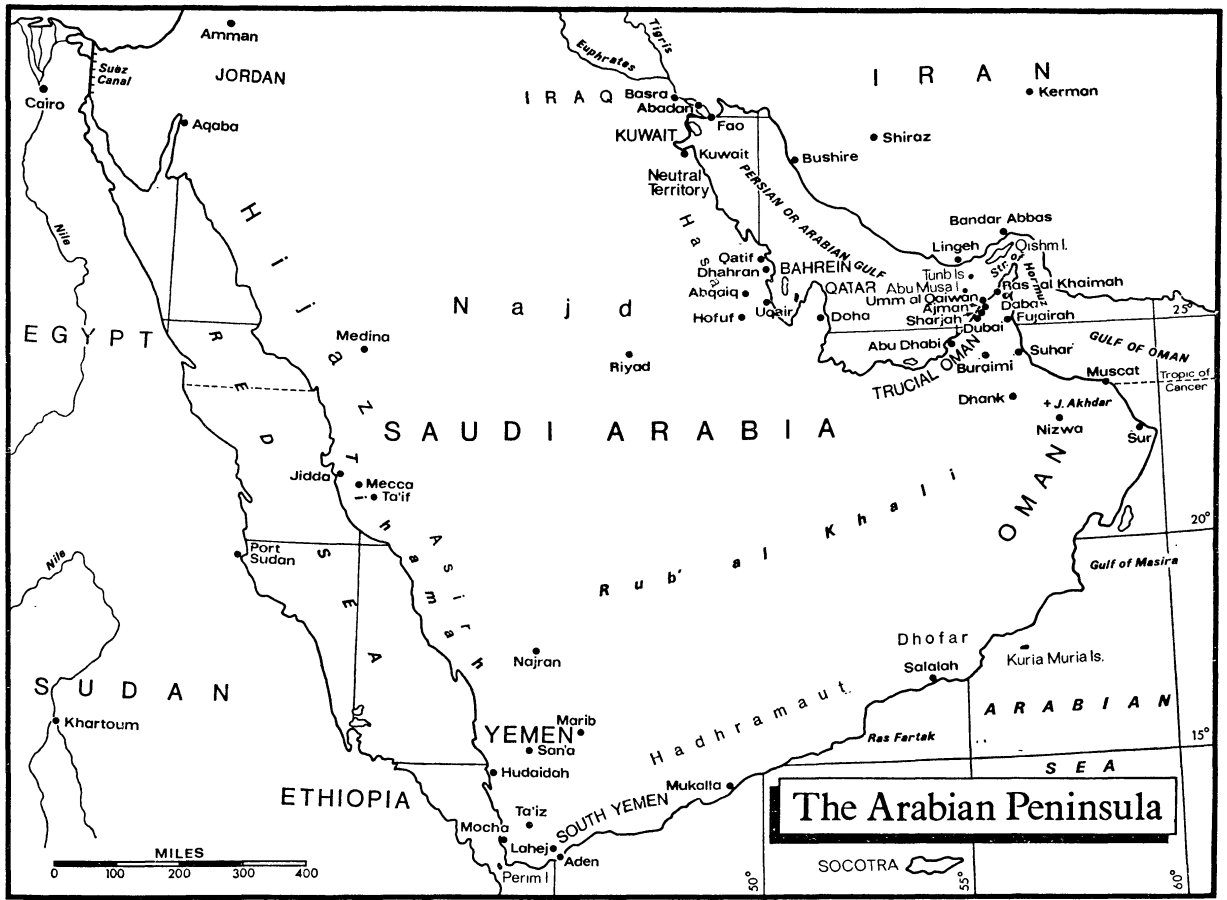
13. Oil and State in Arabia 271

EDITH PENROSE

14. Problems and Prospects of Development in the Arabian Peninsula 286

YUSIF A. SAYIGH

Index 310



S.O.A.S. Drg. No. 722

drawn by a. f. de souza

This page intentionally left blank

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SURVEY

I

SOME WESTERN STUDIES OF SAUDI ARABIA, YEMEN AND ADEN

DEREK HOPWOOD

Most Westerners writing on the Arab world fall into one of two categories. There are those for whom the 'reality' lies in the great cities of the Middle East. They contend that it is amid the throbbing life of these cities that political, economic and cultural history is made, that patterns of Arab history must be sought amongst the rulers, the *ᶜulama'*, the *harafish* of Cairo, the great families and notables of Damascus, or the merchants of Aleppo. Others approach the Arab world from the desert and feel at home with the 'pure' inhabitant of the desert or tribal world. To understand and write profoundly about this world almost always implies a first-hand and intimate knowledge of its inhabitants and its society. To isolate either of these two approaches implies a less than complete approach to the totality of the Arab world, but the writers of the papers in this volume have concentrated on one of them and it has been my task to look at studies written in the latter category.

The Arabian peninsula has attracted to itself a large number of devotees and almost all the works under consideration have been written as a result of first-hand experience, a situation which has begun to change only in very recent years when works based on documentary research have begun to appear. What has been written previously has been largely impressionistic travel literature (but often of a more than transitory value), professional journalism or political memoirs. Historians are only now starting to work in the field – by a historian I mean one who searches for and then investigates the patterns of past human life and by choosing those patterns which seem significant writes his history. The lack of historical works of this nature on nineteenth-century and twentieth-century Arabia is clear (although some of the papers in this volume now demonstrate this approach). A competent journalist or other personal observer can trace the story of contemporary or near contemporary events and often has the advantage of close acquaintance with local factors, but what he writes is not history.

The title originally assigned to this paper, 'Published Sources for the

Study of the Arabian Peninsula', was too wide to have much meaning and could presumably include anything from India Office records on the Persian Gulf and Aden, an incomparably dull subject to write about, to the wealth of descriptive and travel literature that has appeared on Arabia. Once government documents had been rejected the field was still extensive. The writings of the nineteenth century and earlier represented something perhaps strictly outside the scope of the conference, something approaching creative literature or the history of exploration. Moreover, writers such as Hogarth, Kiernan and Jacqueline Pirenne had all written the history of Arabian exploration and most of us have read (at least in part) Burton, Palgrave, Niebuhr, Burckhardt and Doughty. Nor would I want to dispute Lawrence's verdict that *Arabia Deserta* 'is the first and indispensable work upon the Arabs of the desert'. With a number of notable exceptions, the literature of the twentieth century on Arabia is more humdrum, less suitable to be classed as 'literature' but growing in volume especially in recent years. I have noted at least 150 books published since the Second World War. Clearly not all of these can be covered in a paper as short as this and some criteria of selection had to be established. I have omitted studies of the oil industry which, although of great relevance to the Arabian peninsula, are often of some technicality. The lighter books of memoirs have likewise been omitted, these with great reluctance as several of them display those peculiar and attractive qualities of affection, humour and tolerance shown by British servicemen overseas. What remains is a substantial number of studies of the peninsula, the Gulf states apart, and travel literature published by Western writers since the end of the Second World War which deal largely with contemporary or near contemporary affairs. I have divided these works geographically as nearly as possible.

A theme common to many of these works is, and has to be, the impact of modernity on traditional societies (using both those over-used terms without any value judgements attached). This conflict (explicit even in some of the titles, *Farewell to Arabia*, *Yemen on the Threshold*) is seen more sharply in the Arabian peninsula because resistance to change has been more prolonged than in other parts of the Arab world and because change has come only recently and swiftly. The changes have been described by different authors with impartiality, with regret for the fading of the 'immortal image of mystery that Arabia represented', with self-justification for systems and governments imposed and left behind, or together with an expression of that deep feeling aroused by solitude and the desert.

If we take the end of the Second World War as the starting point of this survey (and wars are taken as milestones in history even if they are not directly relevant to the area concerned) one of the first books to appear

was Philby's *A Pilgrim in Arabia*,[1] his sixth book on Arabia. Although not all would agree with the inscription on his grave 'Greatest of Arabian Explorers', he was one of the most prolific. His biography remains to be written, but this I hope will soon be remedied. *A Pilgrim in Arabia* had first appeared three years earlier but in only a limited edition. His perceptive introduction showed clearly the state of mind of the Middle East during the war and he boldly stated of the Arabs: 'One and all . . . demand complete independence for all the Arab peoples' – a statement little heeded at the time. He also demolished the concept once popular among certain Britons that all Arabs instinctively liked them – 10 per cent he regarded as pro-British. In the first part of the book he described the pilgrimage in chapters of intrinsic interest to the student of Islam and worthy to stand beside those of Burton. Philby then moved on to politics and a certain pessimism crept in, a likely result of his differences with Ibn Saᶜud. The King was 'still the great man of Arabia . . . indispensable to its progress' but the guiding of the state into the modern world could no longer be the work of one man. The Wahhabis could govern a primitive, largely tribal society, but would find it increasingly difficult to deal with the economic and other pressures of the modern world.

Philby's autobiography, *Arabian Days*,[2] appeared in 1948 but somewhat belied its title since a substantial part of the work was devoted to the period of his life before he settled in Arabia. Once there his friendship with Ibn Saᶜud flowered until he became, as described by the king, 'leader of the opposition'. His earlier first steps in Arabia were taken when Sir Percy Cox, Chief Political Officer in Mesopotamia, sent him in an attempt to divert Ibn Saᶜud from his growing hostility towards Husain. It was to Philby's later satisfaction that he had reported then that the future of Arabia lay with Ibn Saᶜud and not Husain. On other occasions, notably in the introduction to *A Pilgrim in Arabia*, his predictions and the policies he advocated have proved to be correct, but his was often a lone voice.

Arabian Highlands[3] was one of Philby's authoritative travel books, but more than that it provided in great detail topographical, anthropological and much other information on the lands of ᶜAsir and Najran. It completed Philby's description of Arabia south of a line from ᶜUqair on the Persian Gulf to Jiddah. Of particular interest was the journey he made at the request of Ibn Saᶜud to inspect and map the Saudi Arabian-Yemen frontier. Dotted about the narrative there were also snippets of information on the functioning of Wahhabi rule in the south under those officials met in remote areas.

No Middle Eastern monarch has had a Boswell more assiduous than Philby, nor is a family history better known than that of Al Saᶜud. On the anniversary of fifty years of Ibn Saᶜud's absolute rule in Arabia Philby

published *Arabian Jubilee*.[4] It was a record of unparalleled change under 'a great Wahhabi monarch', but one tempered with anxiety for the future. The portrait was one of a king disturbed by the currents he had set free and bewildered by the inroads of a world he did not fully welcome. The old man lost his fire towards the end of his reign and, in Philby's eyes, only occasionally regained it when back in familiar situations, settling desert disputes in conclave with his Bedouin sheikhs. In its autobiographical aspect, *Arabian Jubilee* traced a relationship unique in Middle Eastern history, a meeting of east and west which ended in a clash of disparate views. The publication of the book was the occasion for bringing into the open Philby's dispute with the king's family, in which, as he wrote later, he 'opened his campaign against the increasingly prevalent laxity, extravagance and corruption'.

Philby's next work, *Saudi Arabia*,[5] chronicled the rise of Saudi power, an event in the history of Arabia 'second in importance only' to the rise of Islam. It was a detailed compilation of local history based on unrivalled access to local traditions and sources, written in the only possible way – with a deep understanding of Bedouin life and society. The outstanding theme was once more the development of the Wahhabi state through to its apogee under Ibn Saʿud, but the reader throughout has to keep in mind the poignancy of the final tragedy – the confrontation between a puritan Islamic state and the secular world. Ibn Saʿud could have done nothing to prepare his people for this. 'He came to the problems of the modern world as an amateur' and continued to the last the traditions of personal autocratic rule. The book was published after the death of Ibn Saʿud and in a foreword Philby recognized that the material and spiritual climate of Arabia had undergone a permanent change, but despite grave problems he was not without hope for the future. The appointment of Faisal as President of the Council of Ministers was especially welcome.

Land of Midian[6] was a record of travels in north-west Arabia during the years 1950 to 1953. Philby had chosen to visit this area after Ibn Saʿud had forbidden him to travel to Buraimi and Oman because of possible British suspicion of political motives. Midian was the land of the pre-Islamic kings of ʿAd and Thamud and was on the spice route from the south. Philby was following in the footsteps of other Arabian explorers, Doughty, Burton, Musil and others (including Lawrence). His especial search was for ancient inscriptions. This was the last published account of Philby's journeys during which he had covered more of Arabia than any other western traveller. His accounts of travels, recorded in great detail, constitute a unique source of information but are written in a curiously flat and matter-of-fact style which bars them from the ranks of the greatest travel literature.

Forty Years in the Wilderness[7] was the perhaps ironic title of Philby's last work (apart from the posthumously published *Arabian Oil Ventures*),[8] but it was rather to John the Baptist, a voice crying in the wilderness, than to Moses who led the children of Israel out of the wilderness, that one must look for similarities (although Philby denied that he modelled his life on that of his namesake). For the beginning and end of this apologia were exile from Arabia for having raised his voice against contemporary corruption. Philby outstayed his welcome at the Saudi court, not because of his personal failings, but because both the nature of society and Britain's position in the world had changed. Philby had abandoned the western world to identify himself with a desert king's regime and felt betrayed when that regime began to betray its own ideals. In addition, the advice of a former official of the strongest power in the area became less valuable as that power lost its strength. He had also to bear the resentment felt against the close confidant of a former ruler by his heirs. He was not content to remain a silently discontented survivor of the *ancien régime* and the publication of works critical of the Saudis caused his exile. But it was quickly realized that in exile his freedom to criticize was greater and at the end of the book Philby was back in the wilderness. His tragedy was that of every man who lives to see his own familiar world crumble away and his return to a changed Arabia was a sadder fate than his exile.

Colonel Gerald de Gaury devoted much of his writing to Arabia, on a more superficial level than Philby but in a more immediately attractive style. Less committed to the Saudis, he nevertheless wrote in engaging detail and with obvious sympathy for a country in the process of change. The title of his book published in 1946, *Arabia Phoenix*,[9] was the clue to his approach. He accompanied Sir Andrew Ryan who in 1935 presented his credentials in Riyad as the first British minister to the court of Ibn Saᶜud. It was a land largely untouched at that time by modern civilization that attracted de Gaury, but evidence that the phoenix was about to reappear was everywhere. The postscript to the book was a question: how would the country face her dilemma? De Gaury was not certain, but he went a little way in his next work, *Arabian Journey and Other Desert Travels*,[10] to answer the question. It was a collection of travel narratives, not an attempt at political analysis, but contained comments on social and economic problems. He saw the chief hope for the orderly development of the country to lie in Ibn Saᶜud's character. Despite the speed of modern travel and progress de Gaury still had an eye for the past, certainly his real affection was for the Arabia of the past, and he regretted those changes which were, implicitly, for the worse.

Philby and de Gaury were travellers and historians who did not attempt to write a general survey of Saudi Arabia. The first of this genre to appear

after the war was Twitchell's *Saudi Arabia*.[11] The author was an engineer who had been responsible for reopening the gold mines of the Hijaz, for negotiating the first oil concessions in 1933 and for surveying water and agricultural resources. His book was of great value as a primary source for the economic history of the country, and further included sections on geography and social and political development. Much of his material was not original but his text was enlivened with first-hand experiences, particularly his friendship with Ibn Saʿud. He had a deep admiration for the late king, as had most Europeans who met him. Perhaps this admiration led him a little too easily into optimism for the future of the country. Writing in the third edition in 1958 he believed that King Saʿud and Aramco would 'progress together to their mutual advantage' and Faisal would co-operate with the king to establish 'efficiency in government administration'. The second and third editions of the book contained only piecemeal additions and consequently lost their value as the text became more out of date.

The last notable work to appear in the forties, although it was written in 1936, was Colonel Dickson's *The Arab of the Desert*.[12] The book's sub-title, *A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia*, was a misnomer, for into his work Dickson poured in great detail the observations of a long life among the Arabs. It is a book that cannot be repeated as the material for it was gathered during a period that has now passed. It is a record of the 'charming and unspoiled' Bedouin. The author largely ignored modern developments yet he had played a leading part in bringing the oil era to the region. His book contained a wealth of material on every aspect of the personal, social and material life of the Bedouin, but little on the problems facing a traditional society in a period of change. Nevertheless, it is a work which can justly stand comparison with other great works on the Arabs, proof that an Englishman could and did love the desert and its inhabitants. One criticism would be that the author overloaded his book and that selective pruning would have been an advantage.

Of the 1950s four or five studies merit some attention. Sanger's *The Arabian Peninsula*[13] was the second comprehensive work on the area by an American. The author was a diplomat who had worked in Arabia. His study covered most of the Arabian Peninsula and included material on Aden, Yemen and the Gulf States. Again his theme was 'the impact of western civilization' and America's role in this. For him, on the material side at least, there was no doubt that the change was for the better. His survey was not systematic, but rather a personal and digressive approach which brought immediacy to his text. His treatment of areas outside Saudi Arabia was of particular interest, notably his description of the negotiation of the treaty with Imam Yahya. His chapters on Saudi Arabia

covered what was by then largely familiar territory, but his work probably served its purpose of introducing Arabia to America. Its chief drawback was the lack of a really critical assessment of the path the states of Arabia were following. It was not clear whether he realized the depth of the changes America had helped to bring about or how great was her responsibility for them.

It is useful to follow Sanger's work with a consideration of Lipsky's *Saudi Arabia*[14] which appeared five years later and was one of the American series, Surveys of World Cultures, produced by the Human Relations Area Files Press. Books in this series are produced by 'interdisciplinary teams' and systematic files on the country concerned are utilized. The resultant books are compendia of information, 'area handbooks', which have a curiously lifeless quality. It is difficult to rid one's mind of the image of endless card indexes. Opinions appeared as statements of fact and should be challenged. Saudi Arabia was described as a 'backwater' – in whose eyes? 'Slander, mendacity, and treachery are commonplace' and 'bribery and assassination are *almost* recognized weapons' in the foreign policy of Arab countries. Terms such as 'commonplace' and 'recognized' (even if qualified) need considerable substantiation. The weight given to different topics was presumably determined in a previously agreed formula for the whole series. This practice led to certain oddities. For example, only four pages were devoted to Islam in Saudi Arabia (in a work of some 350 pages) while the diffusion and control of information, a subject of lesser import, was given eight. This necessitated the collection of non-facts – 'The government of Saudi Arabia has not engaged in systematic or large-scale information and propaganda activities', 'there are no public cinemas in the country', and so on. Despite the drawbacks of producing studies according to this system, notably the lack of any personality in the writing, undue repetition and the tendency for the material to become out of date, the series does provide useful, if not easily readable information.

To return to a more personal, perhaps more romantic view of Arabia, van der Meulen, former Dutch consul in Jiddah, was a man in Philby's mould who wrote about Arabia in some ways with even greater authority since as an Arabist he had studied under Snouck Hurgronje. His book on Hadhramaut appeared in 1932 and in 1957 *The Wells of Ibn Saᶜud*[15] was published. It was both a euology and a lament. It was in praise of Ibn Saᶜud, the hero of the book and the author's 'personal hero', but was a lament for the fact that heroes do not always make wise rulers especially when confronted with sudden and enormous wealth. The author had sought spiritual integrity in the Islam of the Wahhabis but found that the revenues from oil had opened the doors of the kingdom so that the

materialism of the 'so-called Christian west' had come flooding in. Aramco efficiency tempted the Arab away from his familiar life and put nothing of real value in its place. Van der Meulen blamed the Americans not so much for a process which was largely inevitable but for not having given greater assistance and advice to an inexperienced government. The consequence was that they had continued to pay 'their gold into the hands of an inexperienced child!'. The hero had not become a wise ruler. To the author, Husain of Mecca was not a hero but as a ruler he would not have led his country into the 'chaos' of which Ibn Saᶜud was guilty. Although the tone of the book's conclusion was pessimistic the text was full of glimpses of life in Saudi Arabia and contained telling portraits of Ibn Saᶜud and Philby.

Van der Meulen's next work, *Faces in Shem*,[16] was a collection of sketches of 'Arabians', both Europeans and others, whom the author met in the Hijaz, Yemen and the Hadhramaut. His concern for the subjects of the sketches and his deep knowledge of the area were both equally obvious in his vivid writing.

The last great travel book to appear on Arabia was Thesiger's *Arabian Sands*,[17] published in 1959 but describing an earlier period. His Arabia was not a remote image. It was something he lived with in great intimacy and hardship – 'a bitter desiccated land'. The sands were both villain and hero of his book and like Captain Ahab's whale a challenge to be overcome. As Thesiger wrote, 'no man could live there and emerge unchanged'. But the desert was peopled and his friendships with individual Bedouins emerged as one of the strongest features of a book packed with comment on their code of conduct, religious observances and social customs. As with all great travel books, however, there was something more than mere description. The whole was seen, perhaps with a tinge of romanticism, through the affectionate eye of a sympathetic man under the spell of the desert. The memories of hardship and squalor were transmuted into 'the yearning to return'.

Eleven years after his death Ibn Saᶜud still attracted biographers. David Howarth's *The Desert King*[18] appeared in 1964, admittedly the work of an outsider and non-specialist, fortunately not following too closely in the path of Armstrong's *Lord of Arabia*. It was written without hyperbole and although it naturally lacked the intimate touches of a writer who had spent many years in the company of Ibn Saᶜud, the author was able to draw on the reminiscences of contemporaries and on unpublished documents. While adding little new material, Howarth was able to give an overall picture of Ibn Saᶜud's reign unaffected by personal considerations. The early years were an oft-recounted story but the last section dealt skilfully with the great period of change following the discovery of oil.

The familiar picture emerged of the ageing ruler surrounded by the wealth and corruption which he did not comprehend. More than most he had lived to see his ambitions achieved yet lived longer to see them crumble away. Those who knew him testified that he was unhappy and bewildered in his final years although never expressing remorse. After so many years as ruler self-criticism was perhaps impossible.

The most impressive recent general survey of the Arabian peninsula was David Holden's *Farewell to Arabia*.[19] It was not the work of a historian but of a journalist of long experience in the area with an ability to combine sensitive description with political reporting. His study was the sum of post-war works on Arabia, a farewell to the old but a more than lukewarm welcome to the new. The old Arabia was passing (in some places had already passed) and on the whole the change was welcomed by the author. Welcome or no the process is irreversible despite the fierce rearguard action that the 'old Arabia' is maintaining. The author saw his book as a study of 'the process of change in action'. It was also a study of the ending of the particular relationship that Britain maintained with the fringes of the Peninsula, of conflict with Yemen and Saudi Arabia, of the beginning of the end in Aden and of the imponderables of the Gulf. The British era in Arabia will soon come to an end, but what will take its place? Holden offered no easy solution and believed that further change would not come peacefully.

Soulié and Champenois in their brief study *Le royaume d'Arabie saoudite face à l'Islam révolutionnaire*[20] drew the contrast between '*l'Islam révolutionnaire*' of President Nasser's Egypt and '*l'Islam traditionaliste*' of King Faisal's Arabia. The contrast in religious terms has little meaning as Nasser has not set out to 'revolutionize' Islam, and in fact the authors underlined that the conflict was rather between a state whose constitution was the Koran and one which had chosen to follow the path of secular socialism. They modified the religious contrast by adding that the differences between Egypt and Saudi Arabia were not only (perhaps one should say not even) doctrinal but part of '*un antagonisme séculaire*' between the sedentary and the nomadic. But while this antagonism may be at the root of the conflict the struggle has long since developed into one for power and influence in which the label 'reactionary' is given to others by those who claim to be progressive, and 'secular' by those who claim to follow the true path. The authors brought out clearly in their book the gradualist course chosen by Faisal, Saudi Arabia's '*résponse originale*' to the problem of progress without loss of one's '*arrière – plan de spiritualité*', but the very facts of modernization demanded the introduction of alien ideas and techniques which were brought in by those anxious to build their new world on the ruins of traditionalist Islam.

Gerald de Gaury's biography[21] of Faisal did not add very much new material to the history of the Al Saᶜud, but was a useful, if at times perfunctory, study of Faisal's periods of office under King Saᶜud and later as king himself. Much space was devoted to the war in Yemen and in the appendix were printed Faisal's restrained replies to Egyptian propaganda. They were a clear demonstration of the conflict outlined in the previous book, but Faisal was at pains to point out that his dispute was with the Egyptian leaders and not with the people whom God had 'afflicted . . . with their present rulers'. Saudi Arabia's modernization had to come about within the ambit of Islam, not of socialism or communism, and the country needed to avoid the introduction of 'malicious and dangerous trends' which were turning people away from Islam.

Coverage of works relating to other areas of Arabia – Yemen and South Arabia – will have to be given in less detail. There has been a recent upsurge of interest in Yemen, for little of note was published in the forties and fifties. Professor Faroughy's *Introducing Yemen*[22] was an introductory handbook to the country containing basic information on its geography, economy, social conditions and history. Unfortunately the book was badly produced and contained certain inaccuracies. The historical sections, especially those dealing with the later years, were the most useful. Heyworth-Dunne's *Al-Yemen*[23] was a similar handbook and included a fairly detailed account of the 1948 'revolution'. It was a by no means comprehensive survey of Yemen but contained much obviously first-hand information.

Although Wendell Phillips' *Qataban and Sheba*[24] should perhaps not be mentioned as a serious study of Yemen, his lavishly equipped American Foundation Arabian Expedition did achieve considerable archeological success in the Wadi Beihan in the Aden Protectorate and in Maᶜrib in Yemen. The expedition's stay in Yemen was an indication of how not to succeed by trying too hard and ended in the infamous escape from the Imam's soldiers. Moreover, Phillips' explanation of the reasons for their flight would not be one acceptable to Yemeni officials.

Because of the paucity of material, Claudie Fayein's *A French Doctor in the Yemen*[25] was a timely and charming addition to the literature on Yemen. It was a clear and intimate record of eighteen months spent in Sanᶜa and elsewhere. Dr Fayein without pretension to scholarship made a sympathetic yet clear-eyed record of life amongst those Yemenis she met during her travels and on duty. Gunther Pawelke's *Jemen: das verbotene Land*[26] was written after his diplomatic mission to the Imam in 1953. The account of his journey through Yemen was supplemented by information on the history, institutions and economy of the country.

Erich Bethmann, a former missionary in the Middle East, added only a

booklet – an introductory chapter – about the country, *Yemen on the Threshold.*[27] Too short to contribute much to our understanding of the country, it did contain perceptive remarks especially on Zaidism. It was in the religious field that the author was able to meet Yemenis on a deep level of understanding. The most valuable section of his book dealt with the Yemeni attitude towards religion and towards its future accommodation with the contemporary world. Another French view was given by François Balsan in *Inquiétant Yémen,*[28] a light-hearted and non-too-profound view. His experiences were as a contractor working for the Yemeni government and after many frustrating encounters with an antique bureaucracy any balanced view of the country was to his credit. He obtained relief from interminable negotiations in travel and archeological excursions.

The 1960s dragged Yemen again into the world headlines and a number of new studies appeared although we are still awaiting a definitive work. Harold Ingrams, the famous bringer of comparative peace to the hadhramaut, wrote his study *The Yemen: Imams, Rulers and Revolutions,*[29] as a historical background to the republican revolution. His Yemen was the greater geographical area and he included material on Aden and the Protectorate. He forecast that when Egyptians and the British had finally disappeared from the area the state of Yemen would remain divided as in the past. A modern version of the shifting pattern of alliances – a republic and an imamate – might continue to exist. His old-fashioned though understandable conclusion was that the area would never be as happy as it was in the days when Britain was regarded as a 'beneficial presence'. The Arabs had now to deal with a 'false' modernity for which they were ill prepared.

Manfred Wenner's *Modern Yemen*[30] covered the same ground as Ingrams, not of course from the same background, and treated the history of the period 1918–66 in greater detail. His style was straightforward, his narrative concise and based on an impressive number of Arabic sources. It was history free from the sound of the grinding of personal axes. Consistent with the theme of this paper, the crisis laid bare by the author was that of a medieval autocrat facing the demands of the twentieth century. The Imams' policy of attempting to stem the impact of modernization had led to great changes accompanied by violence. The rulers of Yemen trying to balance the opposing forces calling for or rejecting reform had not succeeded. Nor in Wenner's opinion had the republican regime solved these problems and it had failed to recognize the historic role of the imamate. He, like Ingrams, foresaw the continuation of a divided Yemen in the immediate future.

Eric Macro traced in his work *Yemen and the Western World*[31] the course

of outside interest in the country. This had changed from commercial activity in the earlier years to political and military rivalry in the later period. Great attention was given to the various frontier disputes between Britain and the Ottomans in the first place and then with the Yemenis. These were aggravated in the 1950s as the British laid their plans for the Aden Federation. Tension increased as Egypt helped to stir the brew. The author followed through in some detail the development of Egyptian and Russian involvement in Yemen and the disintegration of the British present in Southern Arabia. He offered no forecast, pessimistic or optimistic, of future developments.

The works by Ingrams, Wenner and Macro were historical, leading up to the war between republicans and royalists – a war which attracted foreign correspondents to the area. The well-known American correspondent, Dana Adams Schmidt, gave a deeply-felt survey[32] of the 'unknown war' based on the reports of eye-witnesses and on his own investigations, from the flight of the Imam Muhammad al-Badr until the Egyptian agreement to withdraw in 1967. He visited both republican and royalist camps. The resultant account was both vivid reporting and admirable journalism possessing the advantages and drawbacks of this genre. It had the immediacy and political insight of good reporting but naturally lacked the precision of the specialist. The Yemen, for Schmidt, was the battleground on which the quarrel between two incompatible Arab systems was being fought out – 'The Yemen war has been fought ... only partly because of Yemen.' The disastrous course of the Egyptian intervention was clearly drawn, culminating finally in withdrawal and stalemate, and for the author the future would surely be filled with strife. The Yemenis were victorious only in the sense that they had obliged the foreigner to withdraw.

It is logical to move from a survey of recent books on Yemen into a consideration of those dealing with 'natural' Yemen – Aden and South Arabia. Although many of the problems of the two areas were similar, the essential difference was the direct involvement of Great Britain for well over a century, from the pioneering of Captain Haines through the heyday of empire to ignominious scuttling. Several of the works concerned had the urgency of apologias for recent actions, but there was still evidence of the more 'classical' interest in Arabia for its own sake. Van der Meulen had published in 1947 a second study of South Arabia, *Aden to the Hadhramaut*,[33] a record of a journey made in the Aden Protectorate in 1939. In his account, as a Dutch colonial civil servant, he made a point of observing British colonial methods. He travelled when Hadhrami prosperity was at a peak and paid tribute to the efforts of Ingrams to bring security to the area. He believed, however, that the Hadhramis themselves would be able

to continue without British assistance. Colonel Hamilton (The Master of Belhaven) in *The Kingdom of Melchior*[34] described his own part between the two world wars in bringing the Pax Britannica to the Western Aden Protectorate in the area of the Yemen frontier. The book was both a record of achievement and a criticism of an inconsistent British policy which failed to profit from the Anglo-Yemen treaty of 1934. It was complementary to Ingrams' account of British policy in the Hadhramaut and was a good insight into the social and political conditions of an area for which the author, despite his disclaimer at the end, developed considerable affection. He was one of the small group of Britons who not always willingly but usually with considerable devotion spent their lives in the remoter areas of the Arab world. (It is perhaps interesting to note here that a third edition of Ingrams' record of his achievements, *Arabia and the Isles*,[35] was issued in 1966. The author added a preface in which he criticized the establishment of the Federation of South Arabia because it destroyed the independence of the Protectorate states. He looked sadly on the fading of the British Empire and the loss of 'will . . . to show power'.)

Three ex-governors and/or High Commissioners of Aden produced their apologias soon after leaving office. Sir Tom Hickinbotham published his study, *Aden*,[36] after many years' service there as a colonial official and finally as governor. It was during his period of office that the proposals for federation were approved by Whitehall. Despite the opposition it provoked the author believed that it was not ill-timed but that British reaction to Yemeni attacks should have been stronger and more positive. Sir Charles Johnston presided over and was an architect of the merger which brought Aden into the Federation of South Arabia in 1963. *The View from Steamer Point*[37] was a good-natured account of the delicate processes leading to the merger which he favoured despite opposition from several leading Adenis. Federation was the only way to save the Protectorate states from falling under the influence of Yemen – 'a gloomy enough prospect under the Imam, and a desperate one under the distraught Republic'. Sir Kennedy Trevaskis' *Shades of Amber*[38] was the most recent personal account of life at the top in Aden. He it was who had to bear the brunt of opposition against the Federation of which he was considered the chief architect. He was also known to be a supporter of the tribal rulers against the Adeni nationalists. He himself believed that the grenade thrown at him in December 1963 came indirectly from the hand of ᶜAbdallah al-Asnag whom he had antagonized by refusing to regard him as a responsible leader. Trevaskis claimed that Asnag had been a terrorist from the beginning – a belief fostered by his earlier deep involvement with the tribal rulers in the Protectorate which had led him to ignore other

forces in the area. Trevaskis was retired at the moment when, as Tom Little pointed out in his book *South Arabia*,[39] there was in the Federation some unity of feeling between the politicians of Aden and the Federal ministers.

Little covered the whole story of British involvement in Aden but especially the later years from the merger until the disastrous exit. As another journalist writing about the area he doubted that British policy would ever have been successful. Commitment to the shaikhs was too deeply ingrained and realization that other forces were at work came too late. The painful route to final abnegation of responsibility was made only too clear. The end of the British era in Aden is a satisfactory point at which to end this survey of western writings on Arabia, satisfactory chronologically speaking but far from satisfactory for those who seek a creditable end to empire.

REFERENCES

1 H. St J. B. Philby — *A Pilgrim in Arabia* (London, 1946).
2 H. St J. B. Philby — *Arabian Days* (London, 1948).
3 H. St J. B. Philby — *Arabian Highlands* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1952).
4 H. St J. B. Philby — *Arabian Jubilee* (New York, 1953).
5 H. St J. B. Philby — *Sa'udi Arabia* (London, 1955).
6 H. St J. B. Philby — *Land of Midian* (London, 1957).
7 H. St J. B. Philby — *Forty Years in the Wilderness* (London, 1957).
8 H. St J. B. Philby — *Arabian Oil Ventures* (Washington, 1964).
9 G. de Gaury — *Arabia Phoenix* (London, 1946).
10 G. de Gaury — *Arabian Journey and Other Desert Travels* (London, 1950).
11 K. S. Twitchell — *Saudi Arabia*, 3rd edn (Princeton, N.J., 1958).
12 H. R. P. Dickson — *The Arab of the Desert* (London, 1949).
13 R. H. Sanger — *The Arabian Peninsula* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1954).
14 G. A. Lipsky and others — *Saudi Arabia* (H.R.A.F., New Haven, 1959).
15 D. van der Meulen — *The Wells of Ibn Sa^{c}ud* (London, 1957).
16 D. van der Meulen — *Faces in Shem* (London, 1961).
17 W. Thesiger — *Arabian Sands* (London, 1959).
18 D. Howarth — *The Desert King* (London, 1964).
19 D. Holden — *Farewell to Arabia* (London, 1966).
20 G. J.-L. Soulié and L. Champenois — *Le royaume d'Arabie Saoudite face à l'Islam révolutionnaire 1953–64* (Paris, 1966).
21 G. de Gaury — *Faisal: King of Saudi Arabia* (London, 1966).
22 A. Faroughy — *Introducing Yemen* (New York, 1947).
23 J. Heyworth-Dunne — *Al-Yemen* (Cairo, 1952).
24 W. Phillips — *Qataban and Sheba* (London, 1955).
25 C. Fayein — *A French Doctor in the Yemen* (London, 1957).

Also in this genre one should mention Eva Hoeck's *Doctor amongst the Bedouins* (London, 1963).

26 G. Pawelke *Jemen: das verbotene Land* (Düsseldorf, 1959).
27 E. W. Bethmann *Yemen on the Threshold* (Washington, 1960).
28 F. Balsan *Inquiétant Yémen* (Paris, 1961).
29 H. Ingrams *The Yemen, Imams, Rulers and Revolutions* (London, 1963).
30 M. W. Wenner *Modern Yemen* (Baltimore, 1967).
31 E. Macro *Yemen and the Western World* (London, 1968).
32 D. A. Schmidt *Yemen: the Unknown War* (London etc., 1968).
33 D. van der Meulen *Aden to the Hadhramaut* (London, 1947).
34 Master of Belhaven (A. Hamilton) *Kingdom of Melchior* (London, 1949).
35 H. Ingrams *Arabia and the Isles*, 3rd edn (London, 1966).
36 T. Hickinbotham *Aden* (London 1958).
37 C. Johnston *The View from Steamer Point* (London, 1964).
38 K. Trevaskis *Shades of Amber* (London, 1968).
39 T. Little *South Arabia* (London, 1968).

This page intentionally left blank

PART I

HISTORY

This page intentionally left blank

2

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GULF STATES

AHMAD MUSTAFA ABU-HAKIMA

In writing on this subject it will be necessary to limit oneself to certain states and certain aspects of development, otherwise the subject will be too wide to tackle in the present survey. The eastern and northern shores of the Gulf, i.e. Persia and Iraq, al-Ihsa' province of Saudi Arabia, and Oman will therefore be excluded. The countries which will be studied are: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States, with special emphasis on the first. As far as the nature of development is concerned, the present chapter will endeavour to survey the political aspect, together with other auxiliary factors which usually lead to development.

From the first glance at those states, therefore, one can see that one is confronted with two types of political unit. The first is an independent state and the second a group of amirates or shaikhdoms which fell under British protection as a result of special treaty relations. But Kuwait, the independent state of today, was until 1961 more or less a British protectorate too. It might be worth our while to notice that these states stretch on the western shore of the Arabian Gulf from its northernmost edge to its southernmost end with only one intermission, namely that of al-Ihsa', a territory that lies between Kuwait in the north and Qatar in the south. In spite of the fact that these states vary widely in their systems of government, it should be noted that there is a common factor among them. They are all Arabian territories, inhabited in the main by Arabian tribes who mostly belong to the ᶜAdnani or northern division of Arabs, the southern being called Qahtani by Arab historians and traditionalists.

For the sake of convenience and because most of the shaikhdoms will be studied in other chapters, Kuwait will first be studied in detail, and the other protectorates, the shaikhdoms of Bahrain, Qatar and the seven Trucial States: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, ᶜAjman, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah, will be dealt with at a later stage.

THE SHAIKHDOM OF KUWAIT[1]

To appreciate the political development of Kuwait one has to look very briefly at the early history of the place. The state of Kuwait is named after

its capital Kuwait which was originally a very small fishing centre on the north-western corner of the Arabian Gulf. The name 'Kuwait' is a diminutive of '*kut*', meaning a small fortress. This town was also known to the eighteenth-century European travellers as Grane (sometimes spelled 'Grain' or 'Graen') which is in turn a diminutive of the Arabic '*qarn*', meaning a small hill.[2] The town's earliest history might date back to the mid-seventeenth century. Yet Kazimah, in the neighbourhood of Kuwait, was famous in the seventh century AD and is alluded to in various Arabic verses.[3]

The ᶜUtub[4]

The earliest settlers of Kuwait of whom we have record in the seventeenth century are the Bani Khalid tribes, who ruled eastern Arabia in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It was their Amir Barrak who is said to have established Kuwait. But late in the seventeenth century a number of Arabian tribes, united under the name of ᶜUtub, travelled from the southern part of central Arabia, because of severe drought, to the coasts of the Gulf near Qatar. They dispersed along the shores of the Gulf and finally met again at Kuwait where towards the middle of the eighteenth century they gradually established their independence of the Bani Khalid.

Famous among the ᶜUtub confederacy were Al Sabah, Al Khalifah and Al Jalahimah clans. It might be useful to note here that these ᶜUtub (singular ᶜUtbi) were the cousins of Al Saᶜud, and they all claim to be descended from Jamilah, a branch of the Great ᶜAnazah tribe, now inhabiting northern Arabia.

Rise and Development of Kuwait in the Eighteenth Century

Al Sabah became the rulers of Kuwait in about 1750. By the end of the eighteenth century, Kuwait became an established shaikhdom as far as politics, economics and government are concerned. Its fleet was said, with Muscat's, to have monopolized the conveyance of trade in the Persian Gulf.[5] Its Arab ruler was independent of all foreign control including Ottoman. Shaikh ᶜAbd Allah ibn Sabah was its second and most efficient ruler to whom Kuwait owed not only its independence but also its prosperity. He rose to power in about 1762 after the death of his father Shaikh Sabah ibn Jabir, who gave the present ruling family its name. Shaikh ᶜAbd Allah ruled until his death in February 1815.[6] This long reign of Shaikh ᶜAbd Allah was destined to go through certain difficulties of a political and economic nature. But before going into the details of these difficulties, it is necessary to examine the structure of Kuwaiti society during his reign. It might be interesting to notice at this early phase of Kuwaiti society that